What is claimed is:

1. An image data processing apparatus comprising:

a first apparatus which enters image data with

5 embedded stegano data that cannot be recognized

visually, the first apparatus sending the entered

image data to the outside and receiving the result

of processing from the outside for holding the same;

and

10 a second apparatus which effects data

processing on the image data received from the first

apparatus to acquire stegano data, the second

apparatus sending the acquired stegano data as the

result of processing to the first apparatus.

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2. The image data processing apparatus according

to claim 1, wherein

the first apparatus comprises:

an image data input unit which enters image data

20 with stegano data embedded;

a data sending unit which sends the entered

image data to the outside;

a result data receiving unit which receives the

processed result data from the second apparatus; and

25 a result holding unit which holds the received

result data, wherein

the second apparatus comprises:

an image data receiving unit which receives image data from the first apparatus;

5   a data holding unit which holds the received image data;

an image data processing unit which effects processing on image data to acquire stegano data; and

a result data sending unit which sends the

10   acquired stegano data as result data to the first apparatus, and wherein

a communication path always or intermittently connects the first apparatus and the second apparatus.

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3.   The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second apparatus converts the acquired stegano data into other information, for sending as result data to the first apparatus, and

20   wherein the first apparatus sends the result data received from the second apparatus to an external third apparatus, for receiving another result of processing.

25   4.   The image data processing apparatus according

to claim 1, wherein the first apparatus includes a pre-processing unit which executes pre-processing of the entered image data, the pre-processing being part of image processing to be performed on the side of

5   the second apparatus.

5.   The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the first apparatus splits the entered image

10   data into a plurality of areas, to send some of the split image data to the second apparatus, and wherein

the second apparatus effects image processing on the some image data received from the first apparatus, the second apparatus, if stegano data

15   cannot be acquired, sequentially requesting the first apparatus to make a re-transfer, for image processing, of image data of the remaining split areas until the second apparatus acquires stegano data.

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6.   The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first apparatus compresses image data entered and held, for sending to the second apparatus, and wherein the second apparatus restores

25   the compressed image data received from the first

apparatus, for effecting image processing.

7. An image data processing method comprising the steps of:

5   by a first apparatus, entering image data with embedded stegano data that cannot be recognized visually and sending the image data to a second apparatus;

by a second apparatus, effecting data
10 processing on the image data received from the first apparatus, to acquire stegano data; and

by the second apparatus, sending the acquired stegano data as a result of processing to the first apparatus; and

15   by the first apparatus, receiving and holding the result data received from the second apparatus.

8. The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein the second apparatus converts the
20 acquired stegano data into another information and sends the converted data as a result data to the first apparatus, and wherein the first apparatus sends the result data received from the second apparatus to an external third apparatus to receive another result
25 of processing therefrom.

9.   The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein the first apparatus executes pre-processing of the entered image data, the pre-processing being part of image processing to be

5   performed on the side of the second apparatus.

10.   The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein

the first apparatus splits the entered image

10   data into a plurality of areas and sends some of the split image data to the second apparatus, and wherein the second apparatus effects image processing on the some image data received from the first apparatus, the second apparatus, if stegano data

15   cannot be acquired, sequentially requesting the first apparatus to make a re-transfer, for image processing, of the remaining split areas of the image data until the second apparatus acquires stegano data.

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11.   The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein the first apparatus compresses the image data entered and held, for sending to the second apparatus, and wherein the second apparatus restores

25   the compressed image data received from the first

apparatus, for effecting image processing.

12.   An apparatus comprising:

an image data input unit which enters image data

5   with stegano data embedded;

a data sending unit which sends the entered

image data to the outside;

a result data receiving unit which receives

stegano data as result data from the outside; and

10   a result holding unit which holds the received

result data.